

**Building on Clean Water Progress
Council President Scott Peters, First District
For the La Jolla Village News, June 2007**

In my time on the City Council, San Diego has made amazing progress on clean water issues, reducing the number of sewer spills by over 80% since the year 2000 and embarking on an aggressive program to clean, monitor and replace aging sewer lines. Beach closures are down 77%, far exceeding the goals set in 2000. San Diego is now regularly recognized by clean water agencies for our success in protecting coastal waters.

Additional work remains to be done. In order to comply with new state and federal mandates, the City must reduce the amount of storm water runoff entering the watershed. Storm water runoff contains oil, grease, animal waste, cigarette butts, lawn care and other chemicals, all of which run unfiltered into public waters. Public awareness campaigns like the City's "Think Blue" campaign reduce the amount of polluted runoff entering the ocean, but the City must find new ways to meet stringent storm drain water standards.

The City Council recently approved two projects aimed at preventing storm water runoff and replacing aging sewer mains in La Jolla. \$2 million will be used to protect Chollas Creek and the La Jolla Ecological Reserve, off the coast of La Jolla Shores, from polluted storm water runoff. The Reserve is considered an "Area of Special Biological Significance" due to its environmental and ecological importance. This pollution prevention program will assist the City in exercising responsible stewardship of this unique asset.

The first phase of the project includes money to repave a portion of the parking lot at Kellogg Park with a special porous material, diverting runoff away from the La Jolla Watershed. Cities and counties across the country use pervious concrete and asphalt to reduce storm water runoff, erosion and environmental pollution. I encourage the use of this kind of "green" technology in all public projects.

Another \$2 million project provides for the replacement of 1,680 feet of deteriorating sewer mains in Bird Rock, along with the adjacent pavement. The improvement project will benefit residents and businesses along La Jolla Boulevard, Forward Street, La Jolla Mesa Drive and Colima Street. The sewer main replacement will coincide with much-anticipated street improvements scheduled for La Jolla Boulevard, minimizing disruptions for area businesses. The first phase of the project, which includes the Chelsea/Sea Ridge traffic circle, has been awarded to San Diego-based Valley Coast Construction. They are eager to begin work early this summer.

Replacing aging infrastructure before it breaks saves the City millions in costs associated with emergency repair, loss of revenues, inconvenience and fines. It also protects the natural assets that make San Diego and La Jolla such special places in which to live. The recently approved water and wastewater rate package will accelerate the replacement of sewer infrastructure and bring the City into greater compliance with clean water mandates.

These clean water projects are examples of the real progress being made at the City Council to improve our quality of life. Sewer mains and pervious concrete may not be exciting or controversial, but they are vital to the day-to-day life of our community. I look forward to sharing more good news with you throughout the year.